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# THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

**Aliens in the dark**

**Tracing ancient treasure**

**The healing needle**

**'Nessie' photofile**

**Toad cults**

**10**



# THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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### In next week's issue

Tall people in blue cellophane and dwarves with green fish-like faces are just two examples of **Humanoids** reported in our new series. In **UFO Photo File** we present authentic pictures of flying saucers sighted in the USA, Canada and Brazil. We examine the slow acceptance of **Acupuncture** in the West and delve into the life – and mysterious disappearance – of **Neanderthal man**. In the first of a series of articles on the **Loch Ness monster** we describe the early reports and local legends that led to the search for one of the world's most famous 'unknown' animals. And to end, an article on **Ball lightning** – a strange and rare phenomenon that science has only just acknowledged and for which it has no explanation even now.

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# The needle not the knife

Needles inserted into the skin at certain points on the body can alleviate pain and even cure illnesses. ANTHEA COURTNEY examines the claims of acupuncture and explains its traditions and history

NEEDLES OF flint, bone, bamboo and pottery made up the Stone Age acupuncturists' equipment. Archaeologists in China have found some dating between 4000 and 5000 years ago which makes acupuncture the oldest form of organised healing. Called *chen-ts'u* – or 'needle-stab' – by the Chinese and acupuncture (from the Latin *acus*, a needle, and *punctura* which speaks for itself) by Westerners – this is one of the most ancient and respected systems of healing.

The earliest written references appear in an ancient work completed between 4500 and 3000 years ago – the *Nei ching*, 'The Yellow Emperor's classic' [book] 'of internal medicine'. This remarkable collection of 34 books consists of a series of conversations in which the Emperor Huangti asks his minister Ch'i Pai for the causes and treatment of diseases. It is clear from these writings that the practice of acupuncture was already well

Below: it looks painful, but the insertion of the needles causes only slight discomfort – and the cures achieved by this method have been spectacular. No one knows how acupuncture works; for many practitioners it is enough to know that it does

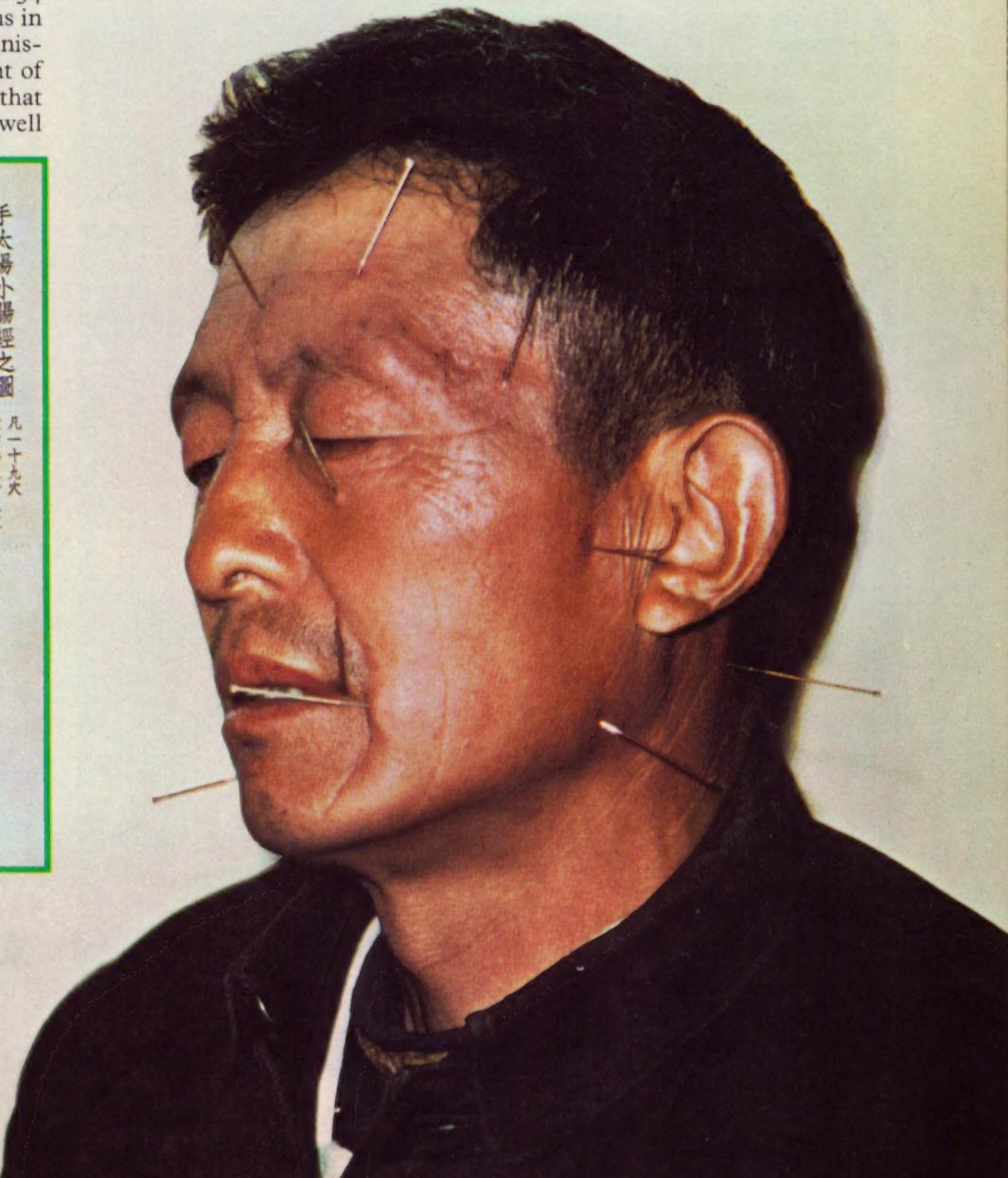
established as part of a complete system of medicine that included herbalism, massage, diet and exercises, and that medicine was bound up with a complete philosophy of living. An ancient Chinese doctor would have been astonished at our habit of specialisation. In Eastern philosophy mind, body and soul form one unit, and Man is an integral part of the whole Universe, with its cycles of seasons, its ebb and flow of energies.

Traditional Chinese medicine is based on the *tao* – an almost untranslatable term, meaning approximately 'the path', or 'the way of life'. A man who lives in harmony with the *tao*, according to the laws of nature (and according to what *is*, rather than what *should be*), is a healthy man. Flouting natural laws leads to disharmony, imbalance and disease.

Health expresses itself in the form of *ch'i* (also written *shi* or *qi*), another untranslatable



Above: a chart dating from the Ming Dynasty showing the acupuncture points for treating the small intestine via the 'Great Yang Channel', the meridian that begins in the fingertips

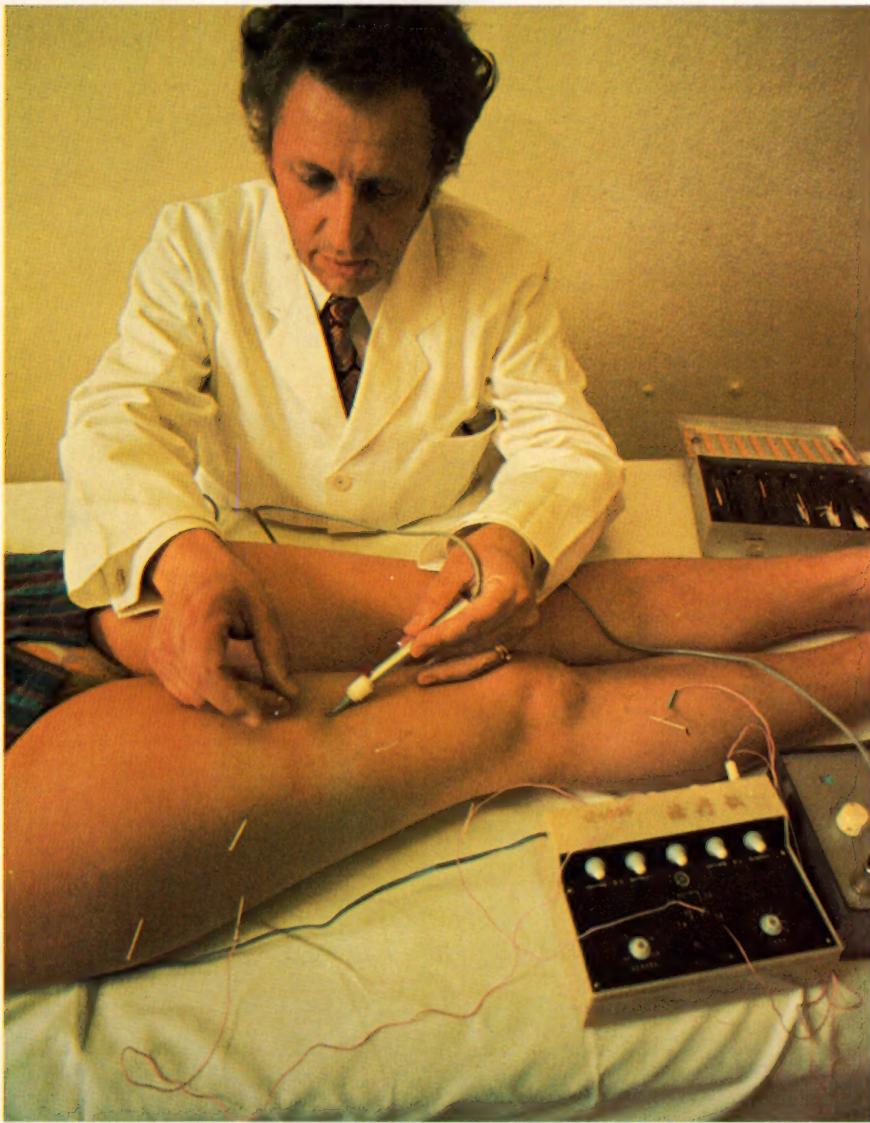


## Acupuncture

term: the idea it best conveys is that of life-force or vital energy. The concept of *ch'i* is alien to orthodox Western medicine and is currently played down in China, but it permeates the thinking of the Far East. If *ch'i* is not flowing smoothly and harmoniously through the body, sickness, mental or emotional disturbance results.

*Ch'i* is manifested in mankind, as in the Universe, in the opposite and complementary forces of *yin* and *yang*. Briefly, *yin* represents that which is receptive, female, dark, hidden, soft and watery, while *yang* represents that which is dynamic, masculine, light, open, hard and dry. For good health and happiness a balance of both forces is necessary in one's body, activities and diet. An excess of *yin* or *yang* in an organ produces ill-health, and the purpose of traditional acupuncture is to restore health by restoring the balance of energies.

*Ch'i* is said to circulate in the body through a series of meridians, invisible channels flowing under the skin. There are 12 main paired meridians on each side of the body, each linked with an organ – the heart, small intestine, bladder, kidney, gall



Right: a red lacquer panel with the interlocking yin-yang symbol in the centre. This represents the ancient Chinese belief in *ch'i* or wholeness – any imbalance of *yin* or *yang* is an evil and causes illness

Below: Dr Hans Marx uses acupuncture at his German clinic. This form of 'fringe' medicine is increasingly finding favour in the West



bladder, liver, lungs, colon, stomach and spleen – and two relating to 'organs' unrecognised by Western physiologists: the *heart constrictor*, controlling circulation, and the *triple heater*, which keeps the body, and the emotions, warm. There are two centre meridians, the *governor vessel*, which runs up the spine, and the *conception vessel*, which runs up the front of the body, and a number of extra meridians linking the main ones.

On each meridian lie a varying number of points known as acupuncture points, which are regarded as the entrances and exits for vital energy. Stimulating these with needles, massage or other means produces an effect in a corresponding part of the body through which the relevant meridian line travels. There were originally 365 points; these had increased to 657 by the 14th century, and new ones are continually being discovered – now almost 2000 are recognised.

The classical points are indicated on charts and figurines, some of them centuries old,

**Yin meridians of hand**

**A** Lung meridian  
**B** Pericardium meridian  
**C** Heart meridian

**Yang meridians of hand**

**D** Large intestine meridian  
**E** Triple warmer meridian  
**F** Small intestine meridian

**Yin meridians of foot**

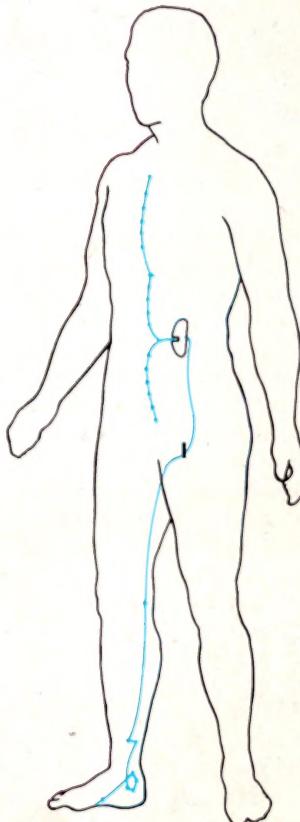
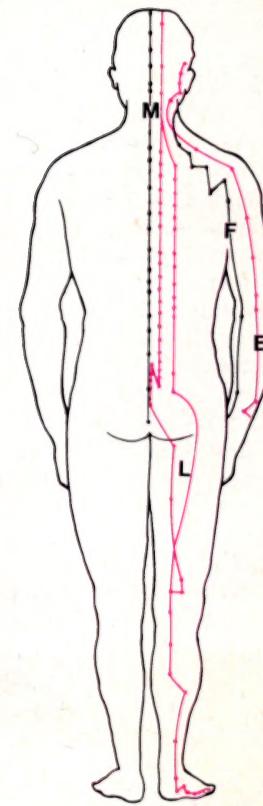
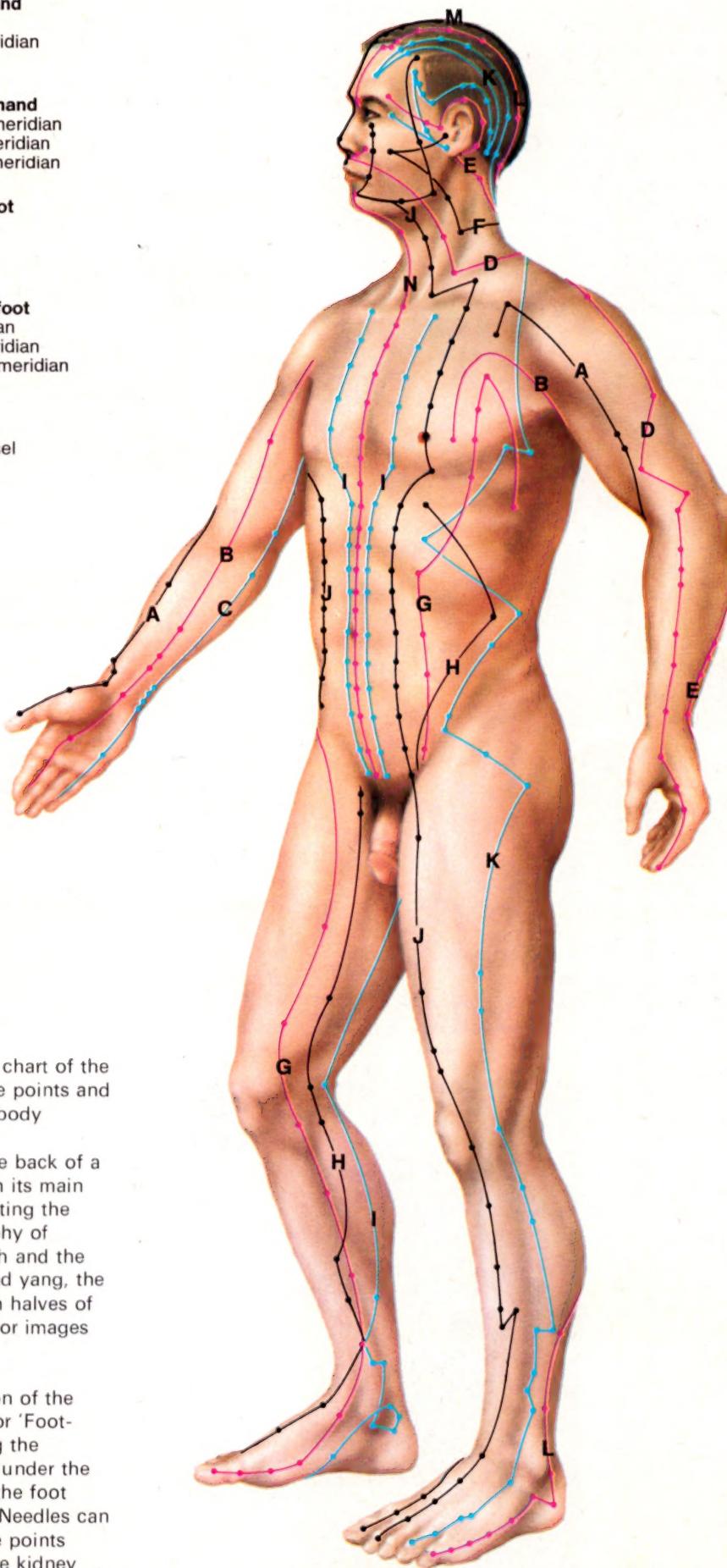
**G** Spleen meridian  
**H** Liver meridian  
**I** Kidney meridian

**Yang meridians of foot**

**J** Stomach meridian  
**K** Gall bladder meridian  
**L** Urinary bladder meridian

**Middle lines**

**M** Governor vessel  
**N** Conception vessel



Main illustration: chart of the main acupuncture points and meridians of the body

Top right: half the back of a male subject with its main meridians. Reflecting the Chinese philosophy of harmony in health and the balance of yin and yang, the meridians of both halves of the body are mirror images of each other

Right: the position of the kidney meridian or 'Foot-shaoyin' showing the invisible channel under the skin connecting the foot with the kidney. Needles can be inserted at the points shown to alleviate kidney trouble



but modern practitioners refer to them by number – 'gall bladder 1', for instance. Their original Chinese names, which have a poetry of their own, refer to their specific functions – names like 'released stream', 'hard bargain', or 'the great eliminator'.

The point known as 'heart 7', on the heart meridian illustrates the versatility of acupuncture. The heart meridian runs from the chest to the tip of the little finger, and its Chinese name is 'spirit gate' or 'gateway to the spirit'; the Chinese believed that the spirit and the will lived in the heart. Point 7 is found on the wrist, far away from the heart, and can be used for both alleviating physical heart symptoms and relieving stage-fright and fear.

Acupuncture in the West is fraught with controversy and contradiction. Some medical practitioners who accept its validity as treatment deny the existence of *ch'i* and the meridians, while a Chinese acupuncturist will point out that Western 'tradition' differs from Chinese 'tradition' because of the near-impossibility of translating Chinese language and culture into Western terms.

However, if you go to 'traditional' acupuncturists in the West, they will be basing their treatment on the concept of *ch'i* energy and the necessity of balancing *yin* and *yang*. Traditional acupuncturists include some medical doctors and dentists, as well as 'fringe' therapists – naturopaths, osteopaths, herbalists, even spiritual healers. Each one will have his own individual approach and may advise additional treatment such as diet or manipulation.

Methods of diagnosis will also vary according to the practitioner's training, but reputable acupuncturists will take a medical history and, if possible, work in co-operation with the patient's doctor. Traditional methods of diagnosis include inspection of the patient's complexion and possibly tongue, and usually a pulse diagnosis will be made.

Above: Judy the dachshund having her life saved by acupuncture. She was going to be put down because her hind legs were paralysed. After this treatment she was completely cured – which indicates that acupuncture is not a form of faith healing

Below: Acupuncture points for curing elephants – essential knowledge in countries where elephants are used as beasts of burden

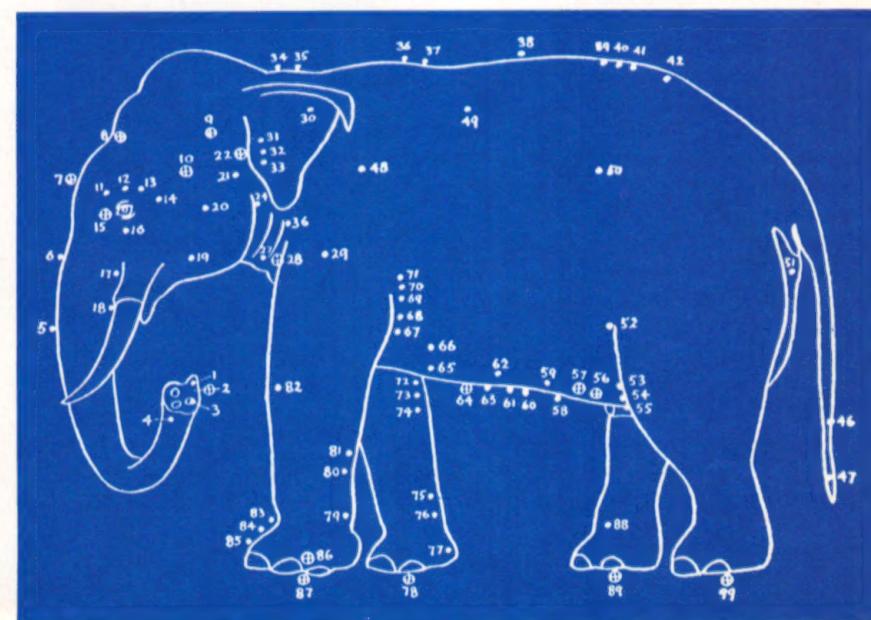
The Chinese discovered 12 wrist pulses, six on each wrist. Three on each side can be felt by light pressure and three by heavier pressure. Each relates to one of the twelve meridians, and therefore to a main organ. It takes a great deal of experience to learn pulse diagnosis, but according to whether a particular pulse is too weak, too strong, 'wire-like', 'soggy' and so forth, the trained acupuncturist can tell where there is an imbalance in the meridians. It is said that this method originated under Confucius, when it was considered demeaning to undress in front of doctors; it is also known in Tibetan, and some forms of Arab, medicine.

One advantage of pulse diagnosis is that, by detecting imbalances at an early stage, the practitioner can restore the body's energies before symptoms occur. This is regarded as a disadvantage by some orthodox medical doctors, since an unscrupulous practitioner could keep gullible patients under lengthy treatment for non-existent diseases.

Having made his diagnosis, the practitioner decides which acupuncture points or point to treat, and how. Treatment usually consists of inserting steel needles a short way under the skin: while this is mildly painful, it is usually less uncomfortable than people expect, and well worth putting up with if it relieves a more serious pain. The needles are very fine, between 1 and 1½ inches (2.5 and 4 centimetres) long, and rarely cause bleeding. For children, small hammers are used to stimulate points swiftly with minimum discomfort.

How long the needles are left in, whether they are inserted or withdrawn swiftly, or rotated, will all depend on individual needs.

Very often 'moxibustion' is used to add energy to an under-energised meridian: here a pinch of a herb called moxa (*Artemesia latiflora*) or of some other substance is placed on the point, set alight, and removed when heat is felt but before the skin burns.



The results of treatment will again vary: there may be an instant and dramatic relief of pain, or a slow improvement taking several weeks – even months in severe cases. Very often patients also experience a feeling of well-being, ranging from tranquillity to an abundance of energy – some people have described themselves as feeling pleasantly 'stoned' after treatment. Some patients may actually feel worse for a time before their symptoms begin to improve, and some experience no results at all.

### The mystery of the healing needle

This raises the question of whether the reported benefits are due to faith or suggestion; however, this can be countered by the consistent success of acupuncture, and its effectiveness in treating animals. On the other hand, a healthy scepticism will not adversely affect a person's recovery, although – as with any form of medicine – the incentive and desire to get well can be important factors.

A traditional acupuncturist will say successful treatment results in a restoration of the body's energies, which in turn affects bodily and emotional symptoms. *Why* sticking a needle into someone should have this effect remains a mystery. Some orthodox doctors, who reject the concept of *chi*, promote the theory that the prick of the needles stimulates nerves under the skin, which transmit electrical impulses to the spinal cord and lower centres of the brain, and thence to the diseased area. This is not regarded as a final answer, and the only certain fact is that applying a needle to one part of the body can produce healing in another.

Acupuncture has been used successfully to treat a wide range of diseases. It can be effective in almost any condition where there has not been an irreversible organic deterioration, and is particularly helpful in conditions where more orthodox methods are ineffective, such as allergies, migraine, arthritis and rheumatic disease.

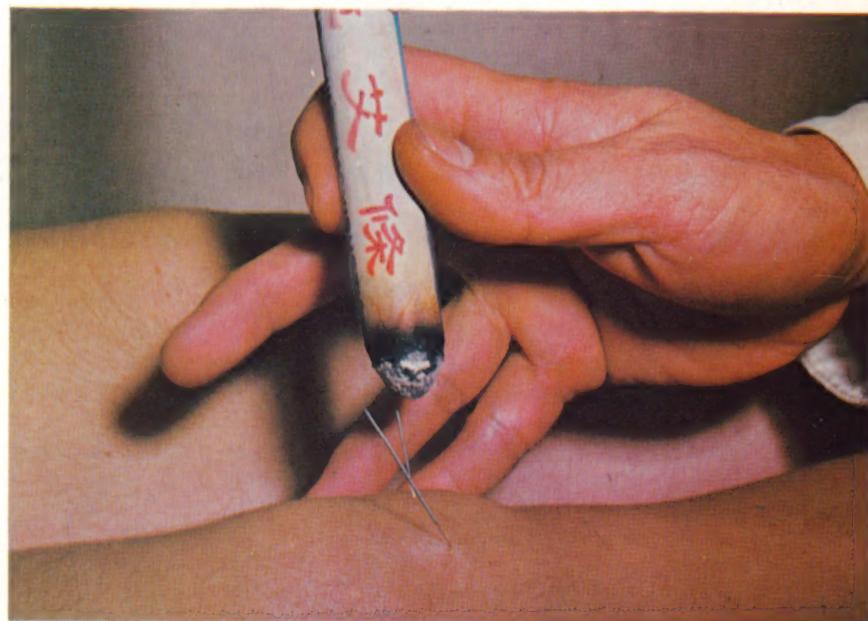
Acupuncture has been known to provide instant relief from long-term neuralgia, and in one case restore mobility in minutes to a patient who for years had been unable to raise his arm above shoulder-level. Its pain-relieving effects are such that it has been developed to produce anaesthesia during surgery. In China, it has cured a girl crippled by myelitis, after a year's unsuccessful treatment with drugs; it has cured appendicitis without an operation, and has even been effective against dysentery (not by destroying bacteria, but by increasing the body's resistance). It *isn't* a miracle worker. But properly practised, it will cure or alleviate a vast number of conditions, without damaging side effects.

According to one legend, acupuncture evolved from observations that Chinese soldiers, wounded by arrows, sometimes

recovered from long-standing ailments. It sounds a slow and painful way of building a system of healing, and few people take it seriously – although similar accidental recoveries have occurred in modern times.

The discovery of the acupuncture points themselves may not, in fact, be such a mystery. Some are well known to practitioners of the Oriental martial arts, both as knockout points and revival points, and could have been discovered accidentally during combat. Some points are sensitive to pressure at all times; others are tender when there is a related bodily pain. But then most traditional points are located well *away* from the part of the body needing treatment. How did the Chinese work out that stimulating a point on the foot would have an effect on the liver? How did they discover, or invent, the system of meridians?

One medical practitioner, while rejecting the notion that meridians are channels of



energy, suggests several explanations for their positioning. For example, when patients are asked to describe where their pains are by drawing them on the outline of a human figure, they more often than not draw them as lines that closely follow the traditional meridian lines. Some people also experience the prick of a needle as a sensation (known in Chinese as *te'chi*) like a current that moves along the meridian pathways.

No one has yet proved that the meridians exist, though some traditional acupuncturists say they can 'sense' the state of a person's energies. Is it possible that the ancient Chinese, living according to a philosophy based on harmony with the Universe, were able intuitively to 'sense' the healing possibilities of acupuncture in a way not accessible to modern science?

*What do modern acupuncturists believe and how do they operate? See page 206*

Above: after the insertion of the needles some practitioners use 'moxibustion', or the burning of a herb on a specific point. It is removed before the skin is burnt but it still helps energise a weakened meridian. The herbs used vary according to the ailments suffered



# In search of ancient gold

For centuries, legends have told of a fabulous treasure buried somewhere in the Razès region of southern France. Did Bérenger Saunière discover it in the 1890s? BRIAN INNES continues his investigation

THE STORIES OF the golden treasure of Rennes-le-Château are many and persistent, and some, at least, are true. To begin with, the area is rich in minerals, and lead and silver, copper and gold have been mined there since Roman times. In the 12th century the Grand Master of the Knights Templar was Bertrand de Blanchefort, whose castle stood on a rocky spur within sight of Rennes; and he brought labourers all the way from Germany to dig gold from his mines.

But local tradition tells a different story. If we can believe César d'Arcons, an engineer who, five centuries later, was sent to report on mining in the Razès region, these Germans were not miners but goldsmiths; and the local historian Louis Fédié wrote, in 1880:

The people of the Middle Ages believed that the precious metals extracted from the Blanchefort mine came, not from a vein in the rock, but from a store of gold and silver ingots buried in the dungeons of the fortress by its first masters, the Visigothic kings.

Then there are the tales of remarkable discoveries, like that made by the young shepherd Ignace Paris in 1645. Seeking a lost lamb, he tumbled into a hidden ravine that

The triumphal arch of Titus Flavius in Rome clearly shows the great *menorah*, the silver trumpets and what may be the Ark of the Covenant, all from Solomon's Temple

And the Lord said unto Moses...

led into a cave lined with skeletons and piled with gold. But when he returned to Rennes with a hat full of this gold, the villagers accused him of theft, refused to believe his tale, and stoned him to death.

More recently, close by Rennes, a slab of gold weighing nearly 45 pounds (20 kilograms) was found, made from fused Arab (or, more likely Crusader state) coins; and an ingot of 110 pounds (50 kilograms) was found shortly after. In 1928, the remains of a large gold statue were found in the ruins of a hut on the edge of the stream that flows below

'Thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold; of beaten work shall the candlestick be made; his shaft, and his branches, his knobs and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side. . . . And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds . . . all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof; and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. . . . Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels, and look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount. . . .'

(A talent is approximately 110lbs/50kg)

Rennes; it had been partly melted away, but its feet were still clearly distinguishable.

Where would this gold have come from? Over the past 2000 years, four major cultures have flourished in the region, and all four have shared a preoccupation with gold as a precious metal. To the Celts it was a metal of magic properties: unlike iron or copper, it came from the earth shining and immutable, hard to work but unchanged by the atmosphere or the conditions of the forge, and was the living symbol of regal power and priestly mystery.

For the Romans, on the other hand, gold was the prize of empire. They subdued the Celts, and all the other peoples of the frontier regions from Spain in the west to Persia in the east; they seized their golden ornaments and took over their mines, and they carried all their booty back to Rome.

The Visigoths, less sophisticated than the Romans, looked on gold much as the Celts had done. Their kings, queens and princes wore gold to symbolise both their power and their wealth; and, Christian converts as they were, they also used the gold to make and decorate their sacred objects.

Then came the people of the Languedoc. For them gold was, above all else, an article of commerce. Many of the crusading knights came from the south of France, and they



Above: a Visigothic cross, of a type now known as a 'Templar cross', from Rennes-le-Château church

Left: a Templar seal. Compare the two men on one horse with the figures on the slab taken from the church floor (page 163)

Below: the al-Aqsa mosque, and the crypt of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem



brought back booty from the East.

For the moment, we may discount the Celts and the Romans. Very little Celtic gold has ever been discovered, and no doubt the Romans took all they could find, as they took most precious objects, back to Rome. But the Visigoths present us with a fascinating mystery.

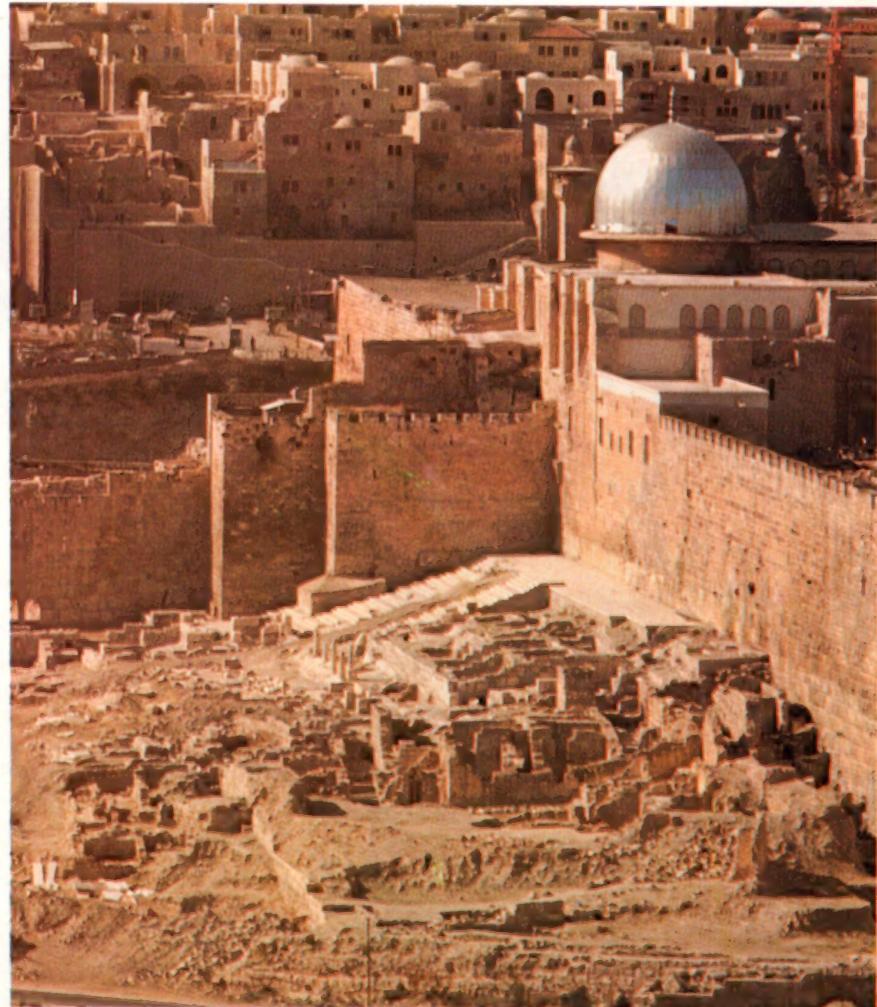
Among the greatest treasures that the Romans had carried back to Rome were the sacred objects of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. In AD 69 Titus Flavius, the elder son of the emperor Vespasian, led a campaign against the Jews, who had revolted against Roman rule. In September 70 he took Jerusalem and sacked the temple, taking the silver trumpets with which the sons of Aaron

had summoned the hosts of Israel, the Ark of the Covenant, the golden table of the Shew-bread, and the great seven-branched candlestick or *menorah*, made from some 110 pounds (50 kilograms) of solid gold.

The triumphal arch of Titus in Rome clearly shows this heavy object being borne away from the Temple on the shoulders of Titus' men, and it was lodged in the Temple of Peace in the Forum of Vespasian. What later happened to it is the subject of a number of conflicting stories. The first tells how, when Maxentius was fleeing from Constantine in 312, it fell from the Milvian bridge into the Tiber and (rather unbelievably) was lost. A second reports that, when Alaric the Visigoth sacked Rome in 410, he carried it off as part of his booty.

The third story, to which we shall return later, maintains that the Jerusalem treasure was taken in 455 by Gaiseric the Vandal from Rome to North Africa. In the following century the Byzantine general Belisarius recovered it and carried it to Constantinople, and the emperor Justinian restored it to Jerusalem, where it was placed in a Christian shrine. But in 615 the Persians sacked Jerusalem, and since that time nothing more has been heard of the treasure.

Alaric died in the same year as his sack of Rome, and he was succeeded by Ataulphus,



Over the next century, the Templars grew ever more powerful in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land. They owed allegiance to none but their Order, and the Grand Master counted himself as important as any king. Their headquarters was the al-Aqsa mosque, built by the Arabs within the precincts of the Temple, and they used its crypt as stables — the 'Stables of Solomon'. They were driven from Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187, but they re-entered between the years 1229 and 1244. And in all the countries of western Europe they established themselves, rich and powerful and collected tribute. They ruled large estates and treasure houses and acting up a chain of transport to the Levant, setting them members of the Society.

## Knights Templar.



who led the Visigoths to settle in southern Gaul and Spain. It is well known that at this time they possessed a great deal of treasure, which was made up of two distinct parts. One comprised the personal jewels of the kings and the accumulated tributes that they had levied; this was used to cover public expenses and was lodged at Toulouse. The other, known as the Old Treasure, was made up of the booty won by the Visigoths during their expeditions. It was eventually lodged at Cracassonne during the seventh century, and Cracassonne during the seventh century, and was removed to Ravenne, but it was returned to the Visigothic King Amalaric when he came of age. Part of this treasure, a small part, was taken by the Franks when they captured Narbonne in the seventh century, but a major part was carried by the Visigoths to their Spanish capital of Toledo, known as the Moors took the city in 711, it is surmised that they captured the famous Misericordia. It included fine magnificient votive crowns of gold ornamenteed with sapphires, but not the menorah. Shall we one day discover in France, wrote H.-P. Eydoux in his *Lumières sur la Gaule*, a hoard as wonderful as that of Guarrazar? It is not until the eighth century, when it was discovered in a hoard at Guarrazar, not far from Toledo. It included fine magnificient votive crowns of gold ornamenteed with sapphires, but not the menorah. Shall we one day discover in France, wrote H.-P. Eydoux in his *Lumières sur la Gaule*, a hoard as wonderful as that of Guarrazar? It is not until the eighth century, when it was discovered in a hoard at Guarrazar, not far from Toledo, but much of the treasure was lost in the famous Misericordia. It included fine magnificient votive crowns of gold ornamenteed with sapphires, but not the menorah. Shall we one day discover in France, wrote H.-P. Eydoux in his *Lumières sur la Gaule*, a hoard as wonderful as that of Guarrazar?

But suppose that Alaric did not take the menorah and the other treasures of Solomon's Temple from Rome, and that they were in fact returned to Jerusalem by Justinian. If the Persians had really found such legendary booty, surely the fact would have been recorded somewhere in their writings? Perhaps, hidden in some cave in the rock of Jerusalem, or lost beneath a tumbling mass of masonry, it remained undiscovered for centuries.

Jerusalem fell to the Crusaders in 1099, and for nearly a century it remained a Christian city. In 1120 nine knights, under the leadership of Hughes de Payns, under the leadership of Hughes de Payns, under Christian shrines, under the name of the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon. They were given quarters in buildings adjacent to the site of the Temple, and from that time they have been known as the Knights of the Temple.



Left: the figure of a demon, generally believed to be Baphomet, from the Templer commanderie at St Brieuc-le-Commanderie in Vinzex. It is more than superstitiously reminiscent of the demon in the church of Rennes-sous-Clairefontaine, North Africa. Far left: Gaiseric the Vandail sacked Rome in 455, and is said to have carried off the temple treasure to North Africa.



## Rennes-le-Château

## Guardians of the mystery?



Did all the secrets of the Templars die with them? No, says tradition. Their rites of initiation are reputed to have been adopted by the Freemasons, whose higher degrees include the Grand Priory of Knights Templars. Another Masonic degree, currently 18th in the 'Ancient and Accepted Rite', is that of the Rose Croix, which first made its appearance in France in the 1750s. In England in 1865 a group of Freemasons founded the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, and out of this in 1887 grew the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. One of the three Chiefs of the Golden Dawn was S. L. (MacGregor) Mathers, who subsequently introduced the Order of the Rose of Ruby and Cross of Gold (RR et AC). Mathers moved to Paris in 1891, and there he instituted the 'Ahathor'

temple of the Golden Dawn, one of whose members was Jules Bois.

At the same time, several so-called 'Rosicrucian' movements were founded in France: the two most prominent were Stanislas de Guaita's *Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix*, and l'ordre de la Rose-Croix, du Temple et du Graal, formed by Joséphin (Sar) Péladan and the Comte de Rochefoucauld. According to a work entitled *Levitikon*, published early in the 19th century in France, the Knights Templar survived their destruction by Philippe IV, and members claiming a direct descent of initiation can be found in several European countries at the present day.

And there is also the shadowy, unacknowledged, order of la Prieuré de Sion. . . .

Right: Jacques de Molay, the Grand Master of the Templars when the Order was destroyed in the years 1307–11. Under torture, de Molay confessed to denying Christ and worshipping the demon Baphomet

Far right: at the entrance to the tiny village of Rennes-le-Château, a crude hand-painted sign announces 'Excavations forbidden'. With permission, certain excavations were made in 1964, but they revealed very little of interest other than a skull with a slot ritually cut into it – presumably a relic of the time when Rennes was a Visigothic city



But in 1307, jealous of the power and wealth of the Templars, Philip IV of France accused the Order of heresy, and within four years they had been destroyed. In France 54 went to the stake, many hundreds were imprisoned for life, and all their estates were taken from them.

Exactly what form the Templar heresy took has been debated for centuries. The Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, confessed under torture to denying Christ, spitting on the crucifix, and worshipping an idol known as Baphomet, but little is known of the alleged secret rituals practised by initiates. What seems likely, however, is that during their centuries in the Levant the Christianity of the Templars had been infected by some kind of dualism very similar to that professed by the Cathars. And 150 years before, the first Grand Master of the Templars to be granted that title 'by the Grace of God' had been Bertrand de Blanchefort, whose lands lay at the heart of the Catharist regions, and surrounded Rennes-le-Château.

Much of the treasure of the Templars was never surrendered. Stored in great castles all

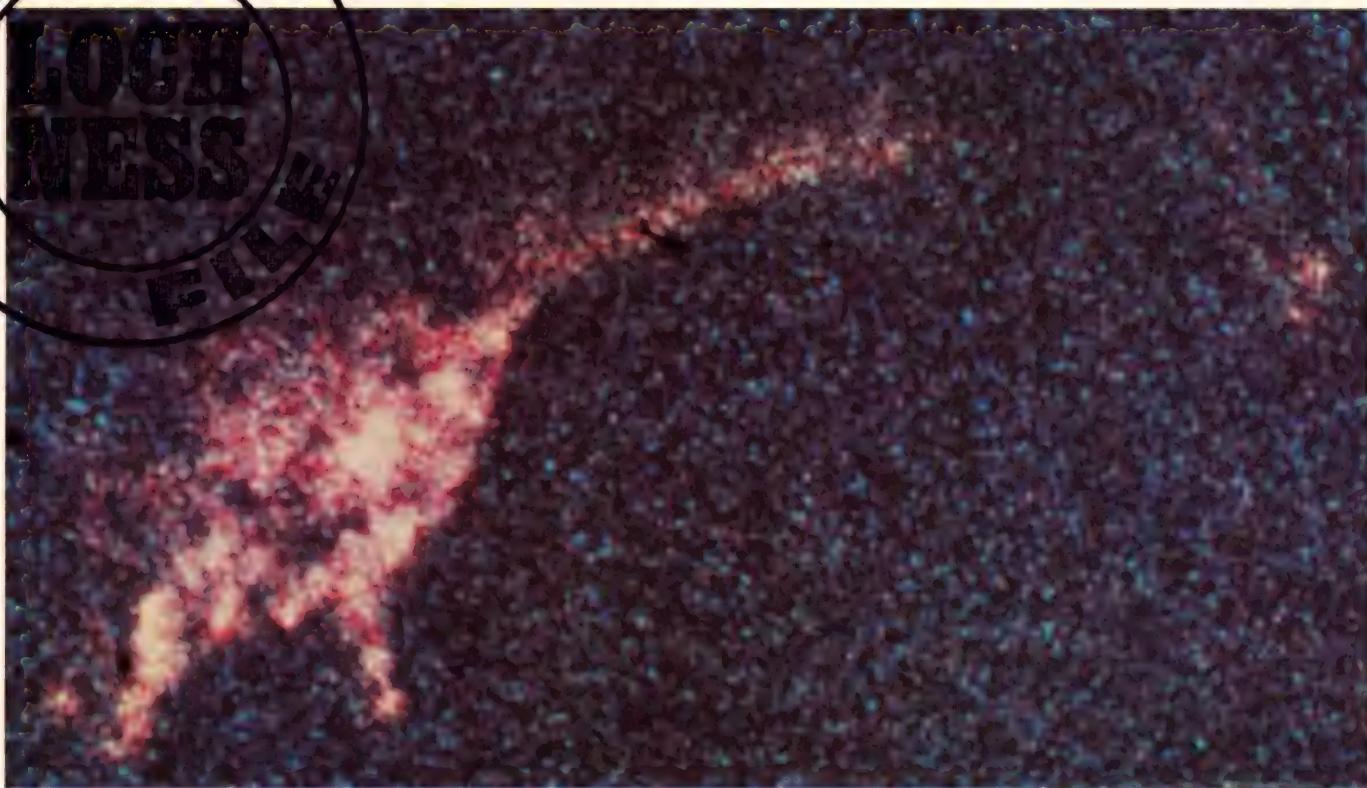
over southern Europe, it could have been buried in the foundations or smuggled out to some other hiding-place. And those who knew where it had been hidden took the secret with them to the grave. And let us not forget that the Cathars too had a very valuable treasure.

So, one way or another, the trail leads back to the Razès region and its ancient capital, Rennes-le-Château. Whether the Visigoths stored the sacred treasure of Jerusalem there when they returned it from Ravenna, or whether Bertrand de Blanchefort discovered it deep in the ruins of Solomon's Temple and carried it back to France – whatever the truth, we are unlikely to learn it now, a thousand years or more later.

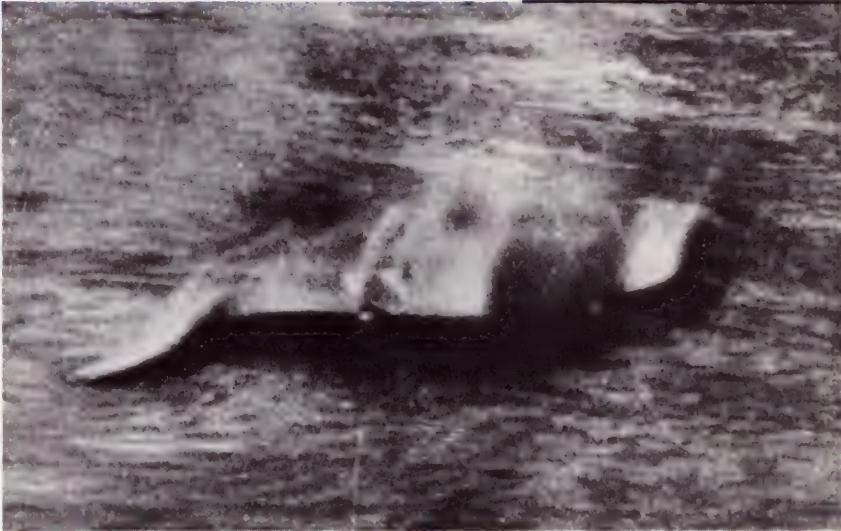
Did Bérenger Saunière find an ancient hoard of gold and appropriate it to himself? Or did he uncover some other secret that required his silence to be bought? Or was he, perhaps, the unwitting tool of a different, greater, conspiracy?

*Why did Bérenger Saunière secretly erase inscriptions on tombstones in the cemetery of Rennes-le-Château? See page 230*





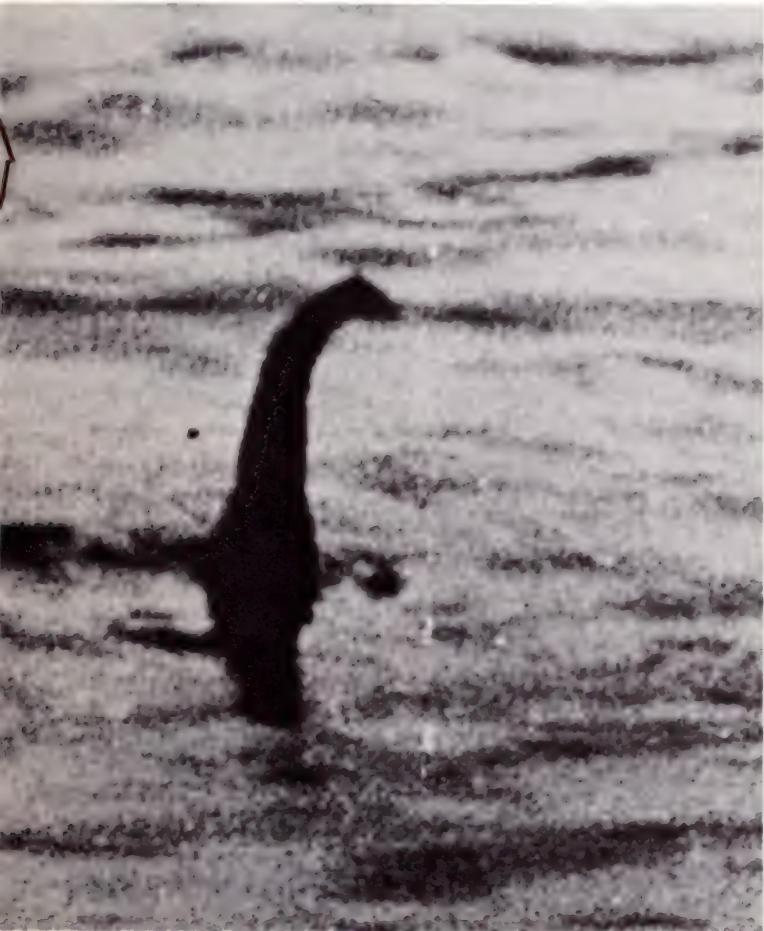
Above: does the Loch Ness monster exist? And if so, what does it look like? If this photograph is genuine, it gives a fairly good idea of the creature's appearance. It seems to show the head and neck – estimated to be about 7 feet (2 metres) long – and the two front flippers of a large amphibian creature. The photograph was taken by Robert H. Rines of the Academy of Applied Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who used a sophisticated sonar system to trigger his camera. When the film was developed, however, there was nothing to be seen – the shots were obscured by silt, possibly stirred up by a large animal swimming close to the bottom of the loch. This picture was taken by a back-up camera that shot automatically every 55 seconds. Sceptics argue that this picture is by no means conclusive and that the object it shows may actually be inanimate.



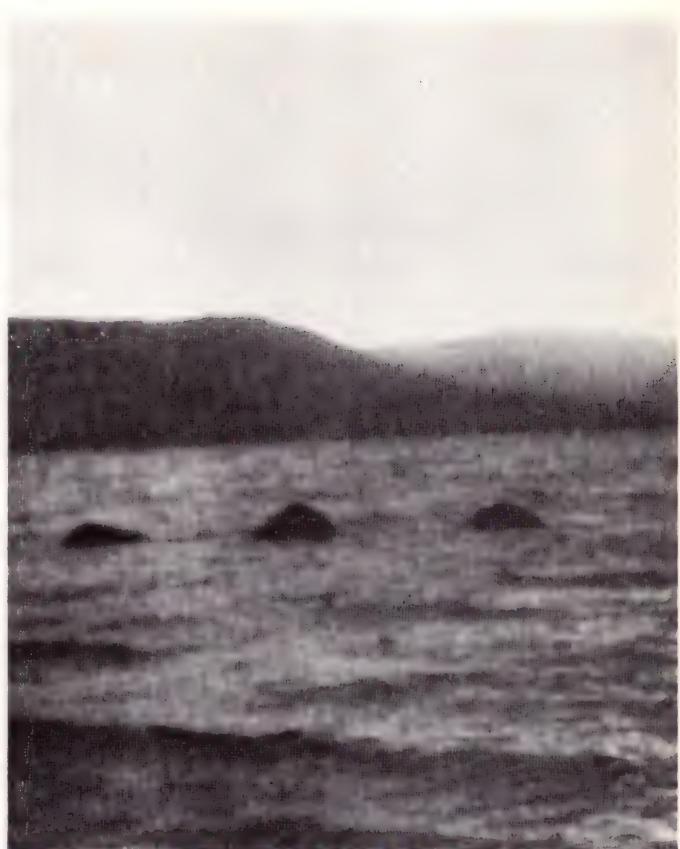
Above: taken by Hugh Gray on 12 November 1933, this photograph is something of a puzzle to Loch Ness monster researchers, who have been arguing about what it actually shows for decades. Gray estimated the length of the object to be about 40 feet (12 metres); he added that it had dark greyish skin, which was smooth and shiny. He was convinced he had seen the monster, and some experts argue that the very indistinctness of the photograph shows that it is not a hoax.

Left: this picture, taken on 13 July 1934 by a member of the Loch Ness expedition organised by Sir Edward Mountain, is very possibly genuine. Like most genuine pictures, it tells us little about the monster's appearance and can only be taken as an indication that there is some kind of unusual creature in Loch Ness.

Below: perhaps the best known of all the Loch Ness photographs, this was taken by R. K. Wilson, a London surgeon, on 1 April 1934. There appears to be a solid object just breaking the surface of the water to the right of the neck – a flipper, perhaps?



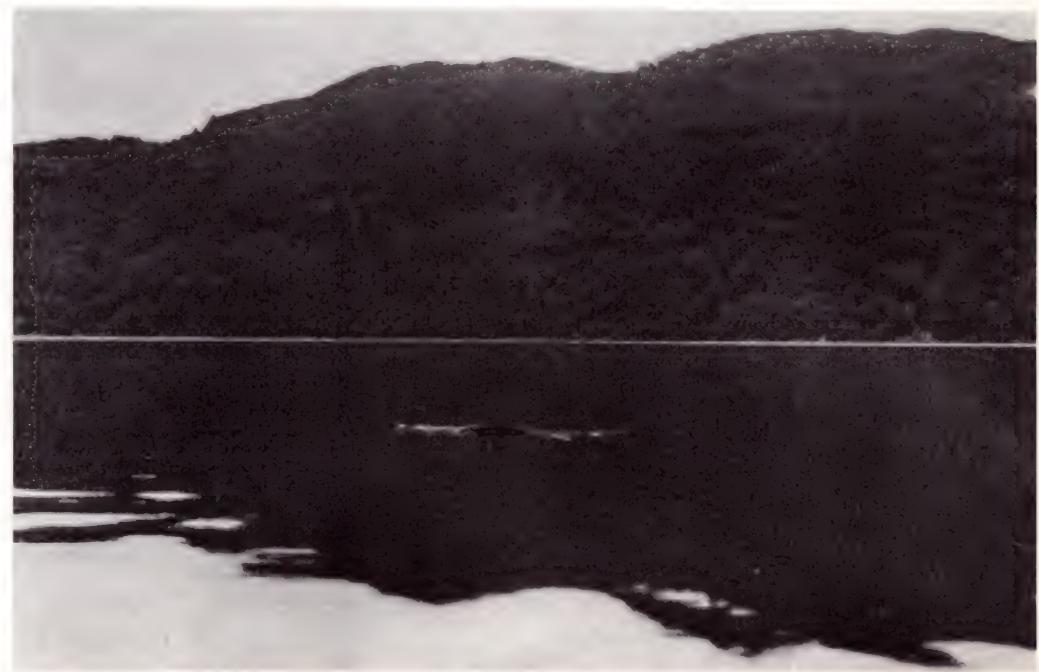
– and in the top left-hand corner of the photograph is a small ring of ripples that could be caused by another part of the monster's body, just under the water surface. But sceptics have claimed that the photograph shows the head and neck of a bird.



Above: this photograph was taken by Lachlan Stuart on 14 July 1951. Early one morning he looked out onto the loch and saw what he thought was a powerboat. But it seemed to be moving too fast for a boat – and then he noticed that there appeared to be three humps, all moving at the same speed. There was also a head, about the size and shape of a

sheep's, which appeared and submerged several times. The creature came within 50 yards (45 metres) of Mr Stuart and he took a single photograph of it. It has been said that breakers in the foreground indicate that the 'animal' was nearer the shore than Stuart reported, and that the three 'humps' could be rocks in shallow water.

Right: although it looks convincing, this is not in fact a picture of anything remotely unusual. In the autumn of 1958 Mr H. L. Cockrell, a serious student of the Loch Ness monster, made an attempt to photograph it at night. He spent two nights alone on the loch in a canoe without seeing the monster – but on the third night, towards dawn, he noticed something to his left, which seemed to be swimming towards him. It was about 50 yards (45 metres) away and looked like a very large, flat head. In great excitement, he took two photographs. Then a slight squall came up, and he went closer to the object – and found a floating stick, 4 feet (1 metre) long and an inch (2.5 centimetres) thick.





Above: the tower of Castle Urquhart provides a gauge of size in this picture, taken by Mr P. A. McNab on 29 July 1955. But the photograph may be of an existing print.

Below: a still from the 4-minute film sequence made by Tim Dinsdale on 23 April 1960 — probably the most famous piece of evidence for the existence of the monster.

Above right: the 'monster' in this still from an 8mm film taken by Mrs Gwen Smith on 22 August 1977 is said to have been a hoax perpetrated by two schoolboys.



Far right: the 'Loch Ness muppet'. This impressive photograph was taken by Anthony 'Doc' Shiels on 21 May 1977. Mr Shiels has sworn an affidavit before a Notary Public that the picture is authentic, and a distinguished photographic expert is convinced that it is genuine.





Below: this photograph is one of a series of eight taken by Geoffrey Watson at about 2.10 p.m. on 3 September 1978. All eight pictures show a wake stretching along the loch – it is unlikely to be that of a bird, and Loch Ness experts think it may be the wake of the monster itself.



# The fascination of the toad

Throughout history the toad has been associated with witchcraft and sorcery. In the countryside it has long been associated with curses and blights. FRANK SMYTH describes the ancient superstitions surrounding the toad – and still thriving today

WHATEVER BELIEFS about the toad have been explained in scientific or biochemical terms, there still remain certain strange and remarkable accounts, such as a team of natterjack toads leading a toy plough across fields, and some interesting practices in various parts of the world that remain 'unexplained' and that stem from the toad's reputation for possessing magical properties and its associations with the Devil.

One strange account involves old Charlie Walton, considered as a bit of a character by his neighbours in the Warwickshire village of Lower Quinton where he lived with his unmarried niece. Although in his seventies and somewhat troubled by rheumatism, he could still turn his hand to most of the crafts so important to an agricultural community. He worked as a jobbing labourer and, since he was willing to put in a seven-hour day for one shilling and sixpence an hour, he was always in demand.

When he failed to return home for his tea on the evening of 14 February 1945, his niece Edith grew alarmed. Dusk had long since fallen on the slopes of Meon Hill, where the old man had been hedging and ditching for a farmer named Potter; apart from the scattered lights of the village, the countryside lay pitch black under the moonless sky.

Summoning a neighbour, Miss Walton went to the farm. Mr Potter thought Walton had gone home long ago, but took a torch and went to the spot where Charlie had last been seen working that afternoon. Charlie was found by a hedgerow, spreadeagled on his back. A rough, cross-shaped wound had been carved on his chest with a bill-hook and his neck had been pinned to the ground with a pitchfork with such force that the head was all but severed.

The following day a murder squad, led by the celebrated Detective Superintendent Robert Fabian of Scotland Yard, arrived at Lower Quinton. The team was met with what appeared to be a conspiracy of silence. Those villagers who would talk muttered about the old man's 'strange ways'; he talked to birds, they said, and instead of cats or dogs he kept natterjack toads. When Fabian visited Walton's cottage he found numbers of these sinister creatures wandering about the garden with their curiously loping gait.



Top: toads were supposed to dance at witches' Sabbats

Above: Superintendent Robert Fabian ('Fabian of the Yard') investigated the bizarre murder in 1945 of Charlie Walton, who kept natterjack toads as pets

As the days went by the whole ambience of Lower Quinton – taciturn locals, the lonely secretive old man and the manner of his death, above all the slimy 'familiars' breeding so profusely in the damp undergrowth of his garden – began to smack of witchcraft and the supernatural. This idea did not arouse contempt in Fabian. On the contrary he began to examine it as a possible pointer to the motive for the old man's peculiar murder. He consulted Dr Margaret Murray, whose books on medieval witchcraft in Europe had attracted some controversy, and began to delve into local history.

During these investigations he discovered a startling parallel to the Walton case. Seventy years previously a man had been found guilty of murdering an old woman in the nearby village of Lower Compton. The man, believing the woman to be a witch, had killed her by pinning her to the ground and slashing her with a bill-hook. Fabian also discovered from one of the more talkative locals that Charlie Walton had used his amphibian pets for a strange purpose; he had harnessed them to a toy plough and sent them running across local fields with the plough in tow. This incident struck an immediate chord

Right: Toad of Toad Hall disguised as a washerwoman, from *Wind in the willows*



Above: Dr Margaret Murray, witchcraft expert, who was called in to advise on the Walton murder hunt

Below: Isobel Gowdie consorts with the Devil. She confessed to using toads to blight crops by magic



with Dr Murray, who was able to relate it to the case of Isobel Gowdie, a Scottish witch, who was burned at the stake in 1662; Isobel had confessed to using a team of toads and a miniature plough in just the same way in order to blight crops by magic.

The spring of 1945 had come early and promised a good season for crops and animals; but both seedlings and livestock in

the Lower Quinton area had failed to make good that promise. It seemed inconceivable in the middle of the 20th century, but to Fabian the truth – however bizarre – seemed to be that old Walton had been cut down because someone thought he was a witch and was convinced he and his toads were to blame for blighting the crops. Fabian was certain he knew the culprit, but sporadic police enquiries over the next 20 years failed to turn up enough evidence; the killer was never charged.

To folklorists this episode fitted a pattern that had remained constant for centuries all over the world – the deep-rooted, universal loathing of the toad. No other creature, not even the serpent that tempted Eve from Paradise, has inspired such hatred. Only Toad of Toad Hall, among all his literary kin, has had anything like a good notice – and even he is depicted in Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the willows* as a bombastic and stupid animal, an object of derision.

Ben Jonson, in his *Masque of queens*, has one of his hags cry:

I went to the toad that lies under the wall

I charmed him out and he came to my call;

I scratched out the eyes of the owl before

I tore the bat's wings; what would you have more?

And Jonson, in an annotation of his production for Elizabeth I, explained to the Queen that 'these [toads] also, both by the confession of Witches and Testemoney of writers,



## Toads

are of principal use in theyr witch-craft.'

For centuries toads have represented not just witchcraft but evil in general. Every French schoolchild knows the story of Clovis the Great and his banner or 'oriflamme' bearing the device of three toads. When he became King of France in AD 481, Clovis was a pagan and as such was certainly a believer in witchcraft and its powers. He launched a campaign against the Romans and defeated the last Roman governor of Gaul at Soissons in 486 before going on to defeat the Alemanni, old allies of Rome. He now faced a major military challenge – the destruction of the Visigoth kingdom that was centred on Toulouse.

Marching towards his objective he had the banner of the three toads fluttering at the head of the army. On the way, however, he saw a vision of his banner outlined in the clear blue sky; as he watched, the toads turned into three lilies, symbols of the Blessed Virgin. Clovis recognised this as a sign that he should embrace Christianity, a course he prudently took before going on to defeat his last great enemy. Since then the oriflamme of France has carried three lilies – the 'fleur-de-lis'.

The toad's reputation varies from country to country. In Romania, for example, it was shunned and feared but never molested since, for some unknown reason, a man who killed it was considered capable of killing his own mother. In some areas, however, it was considered lucky; in England a toad in a Cornish tin mine is a harbinger of a lucky strike. In parts of rural Cambridgeshire it was looked on with favour; it ate spiders, which locally were believed to be the



Above: Shires, the traditional British farm horses. In East Anglia the 'horse whisperers' or 'toadmen' gained total control over horses by the application of a lotion made from the powdered skeleton of a toad

Left: the pagan King Clovis of France being baptised. His conversion in AD 489 was the result of his vision in which the three toads on his banner turned into three lilies, symbols of the Virgin

embodiment of Satan, and it was credited with foretelling thunderstorms and droughts by its periodic movements to and from breeding grounds.

In parts of East Anglia, particularly Norfolk, the toad was intrinsically linked with a sect of horse-handlers known variously as 'horse whisperers' or 'toadmen'. These skilled men are said still to exist in this area, where heavy horses are even today used in farming.

One Norfolk horseman, Albert Love, who was born in 1886, described in detail how the connection existed. A natterjack toad was taken home, killed, then put on a whitethorn bush for 24 hours until it was dry. It was then buried in an ant hill and left there until the appearance of a full moon. The skeleton of the toad was taken to a stream and watched carefully in the moonlight to see whether the 'crotch bone' floated against the current. If it did it was taken back home, baked, powdered and put in a box; this powder could be mixed with a special oil solution. If you applied this to the horse's tongue, nostrils, chin and chest, the horse would be your servant and do anything you wanted. In Suffolk most horsemen used the bone whole, keeping it wrapped in linen; to 'jade', or stop, a horse they would touch it on the pit of the shoulder with the bone – and touch it on the rump to release it.

A similar ceremony is even today carried out in north-east Scotland, where there still exists an ancient organisation of horsemen,



which is called the Society of the Horsemen's Word.

Many experts have suggested that the 'horse whisperers' in fact did just what their name implied – trained their horses to respond to a whisper in the wind, while others used various scents and herbs to attract or repel their charges. Whatever the truth, they were a privileged breed in the days of horse power and no doubt surrounded their real yet secret skills with such 'hex' stories as that involving the dead toad.

A curious Roman tradition, which has apparently been preserved in parts of the English Fens, is that of using a toad as a primitive compass. The Romans used to place a dagger blade on a toad's back; it is said that the creature would move around slowly until the dagger pointed due north and then stop.

How much of the legend of the toad is really true we will probably never know for certain. But there is no denying its significance to people throughout the centuries as a creature surrounded in mystery and magical characteristics, whose sinister influence was not lightly dismissed when no other acceptable explanation was to hand.

Above: a macabre feast – the ingredients of the main dish include unbaptised babies and live toads. Eating the witches' brew confers the 'ability' to fly on a broomstick or on a devilish beast

Left: The natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*), much-maligned for centuries

#### Further reading

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Charles Fort, *The complete books of Charles Fort*, Dover (New York) 1974



# Aliens in the dark

THE UFO PHENOMENON often seems to veer into the realms of the psychic – indeed, some researchers believe UFOs to be from another dimension altogether. However, this view must be considerably modified when one

**UFOs are sometimes too aggressive to be ignored. CHARLES BOWEN continues his examination of the world's classic sightings**

## 'Something is buzzing our airfield'

**Radar-visual: Bentwaters, near Ipswich, England, 13 August 1956**

THE NIGHT OF 13 August 1956 was a busy one for RAF and USAF air controllers and radar operators in East Anglia. Although some of the many inexplicable radar traces they obtained were probably spurious, others were undoubtedly from unknown objects. The sighting described here was stated by the USAF Condon Report as 'the most puzzling and unusual case in the radio-visual files'.

The main events began at 10.55 p.m. at RAF Bentwaters, near Ipswich, a station leased to the United States Air Force. A Ground Controlled Approach (GCA) radar

comes across cases in which UFOs show up on radar screens, make deep marks in railway sleepers, or leave calcined stones behind as they did in these cases from England, France and Spain.

had been alerted by ground control, looked down and saw the fuzzy light flash between his aircraft and the ground. The UFO was heading towards Lakenheath, another RAF aerodrome leased to the USAF, and immediate warning was given.

For the record, there was no mention of a sonic boom at Bentwaters. Ground observers at Lakenheath saw the light approach, stop dead, and then move swiftly out of sight to the east. Some time after that two white lights were seen; they joined up and disappeared in formation.

Observers and radar operators of the



operator picked up a fast-moving target 30 miles (50 kilometres) to the east, heading in from the sea at a speed of 2000 to 4000 miles per hour (3200 to 6440 km/h). It passed directly over Bentwaters and sped away until it disappeared from the scope 30 miles (50 kilometres) to the west. This overflight was not just a radar observation, however; a tower operator on the ground looking up saw a light 'blurred out by its high speed', while the pilot of a USAF C-47 aircraft flying over Bentwaters at 4000 feet (1200 metres), who

Lakenheath GCA and radar traffic control centre scopes testified to having recorded objects travelling at terrific speeds, stopping, and changing course instantaneously. After some hesitation the Americans at Lakenheath put through a call to the RAF.

The RAF Chief Controller at Bentwaters remembers USAF at Lakenheath telephoning to say something was 'buzzing' their airfield circuit. He scrambled a Venom night fighter from RAF Waterbeach, and his interception controller, with a team of three highly



trained personnel, took over. The Venom was vectored onto the UFO and the pilot, who was accompanied by a navigator, called out 'Contact' when he could see it, and 'Judy' when the navigator had the target fairly and squarely on the fighter's own radar scope. The Venom closed on the target but after a

few seconds, and in the space of one or two sweeps on the scopes, the object appeared behind the fighter. The pilot called out 'Lost contact, more help,' and he was told that the target was now behind him.

Meanwhile the chief controller scrambled another Venom fighter. The American witnesses said the UFO 'flipped over' and got behind the RAF fighter, which then manoeuvred to try to get behind the UFO. This information was given to the USAF-sponsored study of the UFO phenomenon under Dr E. U. Condon at Colorado University. Until the Condon Report was published in January 1969 the case had remained secret. A detailed study was carried out by Dr James McDonald, an upper atmosphere physicist at Arizona University. This was a sighting the Condon Report could not dismiss; indeed, it had to admit that 'the apparently rational, intelligent behavior of the UFO suggests a mechanical device of unknown origin as the most probable explanation.'

## 'Two very odd creatures'

**Close encounter of the third kind: Quarouble, near Valenciennes, France, 10 September 1954**

The small French village of Quarouble, not far from Valenciennes close to the Belgian border, was shaken by the events of the night of 10 September 1954.

At about 10.30 p.m., 34-year-old Monsieur Marius Dewilde was sitting reading in the kitchen of his little house. His wife and son were already in bed. The house was situated among woods and fields just under a mile from the village. There was a fenced garden in front of the house, and to one side of this there ran a National Coal Mines railway track between St Amand-les-Eaux and the giant Blanc Misseron steel works where M. Dewilde was employed.

Suddenly his dog started to bark and howl and, thinking there was a prowler or smuggler outside the house, M. Dewilde took his flashlight and ventured out into the darkness. He was instantly aware of an ill-defined shape to his left, on or near the railway line; he thought it might be a farmer's truck. Then, as his dog came up to him, cringing on her belly, he heard a sound to his right. He swung round, and his torch beam fell on two very odd creatures, each just over 3 feet (1 metre) tall and wearing what appeared to be a diver's suit. M. Dewilde said they seemed to

be shuffling along on very short legs. He noticed that they had very broad shoulders, but no arms and that they wore huge helmets. They were heading for the dark shape he had seen on the railway line.

Recovering from his initial surprise, the tough, taciturn steel worker ran to the garden gate with the intention of cutting off the interlopers from the path. He was about 2 yards (2 metres) from them when a blinding beam of light, the colour of magnesium flares, issued from an opening in the side of the dark shape. The beam struck him and he was stopped dead in his tracks, unable to move or shout; it was as though he were paralysed, he said. With a sense of horror he watched the two creatures pass within a yard (1 metre) of him, and on towards the still indistinguishable shape.

Suddenly the light went out and, recovering the use of his muscles, M. Dewilde set off after the small creatures. All he saw, however, was what appeared to be a door closing in the side of the object, which then rose slowly from the ground like a helicopter. There was a whistling noise, and M. Dewilde saw steam clouding up from beneath the contraption. After rising about 30 yards (30 metres) the craft – if that is what it was – set off towards the east, climbing and glowing red as it went.

Shocked, and in a highly agitated state, M. Dewilde woke up his wife, then ran off to the police station in the village. The policemen on duty thought he was out of his mind and sent him on his way. But he contrived to get access to the Commissioner who, after listening to his semi-coherent account, realised that this man – by now in a state of incontinence – was neither joking nor mad.

A detailed enquiry was set up by the regular police, the air gendarmerie and the





Territorial Security Department. They were convinced that the witness was not lying. They were convinced, too, that the object

could not have been a helicopter (carrying contraband for example) because of the mass of telephone wires overhead which would have prevented a landing.

It was suggested by one journalist that M. Dewilde was suffering from the effects of a head wound, and had had an hallucination, but this theory was untenable in view of the discovery of marks, sharply and deeply cut, in the iron-hard wood of the railway sleepers where M. Dewilde said the object had stood. A railway engineer calculated that it would have taken a weight of 30 tons (30 tonnes) to have made the marks. It would have taken great heat to have produced the burnt and calcined ballast stones found between the affected sleepers, and this would have called for an extremely powerful hallucination!

### **'As big as a jumbo-jet'**

**Radar-visual: Valencia, Spain, 11 November 1979**

On Sunday evening, 11 November 1979, a Supercaravelle of the Spanish airline TAE, on a charter flight from Salzburg to Tenerife, put down unexpectedly at Valencia in Spain. The flight had been four hours late in starting, and this extra delay was almost the last straw for the tourists on board the aeroplane. Fortunately, most of them were unaware of what had gone on outside – 24,000 feet (7000 metres) above the Mediterranean.

The incident began after the aeroplane had passed over Ibiza. In an interview with newsman Juan J. Benítez, the skipper, Commandante Lerdo de Tejada, said that a few minutes before 11 p.m. he was requested by Air Control in Barcelona to tune in to radio frequency 121.5 megahertz, an emergency wavelength. He picked up the hiss of the carrier wave but received no instructions. Before the captain could query this he saw two powerful red lights at the 'nine o'clock' position (to the left, or port side).

Commandante Tejada thought there was only one 'thing' carrying two lights. This object bore down on them at great speed,

coming up on their left, and a little behind them. He added:

When we saw them first they were at about 10 miles [16 kilometres]. Then they made towards us and literally 'played' with us at about half-a-mile [1 kilometre] . . . the object was moving upwards and downwards at will, all around us, and performing movements that would be quite impossible for any conventional machine to execute.

According to the captain the object seemed to be as big as a jumbo-jet. Finally, he said, the speed and closeness of this monstrous object were such that he was forced to perform a 'break' – a sharp turn to avoid possible collision – about 60 miles (100 kilometres) from Valencia. Air Control in Barcelona were informed that unidentified traffic was close by, and that the UFO had stayed near to the aircraft for eight minutes. After the 'break' the UFO followed the jet for another 30 miles (50 kilometres).

The controls and instruments of the Supercaravelle were not affected during the emergency. The automatic pilot did, in fact, fail – but that, said the captain, was not due to the UFO. Finally Manises Airport at Valencia was contacted and permission was requested to make an emergency landing. The Supercaravelle touched down a few minutes before midnight.

Señor Morlan, director of the airport, his traffic controller and other personnel confirmed seeing an extraordinary object with red lights over the airport.

Señor Benítez also found that there had been a vigorous response to the alert by the Spanish Air Force as military radars had picked up unidentified targets in the precise area where the TAE airliner was flying. The unidentified echoes persisted and two F-1 fighters were scrambled from Los Llanos five minutes after the Supercaravelle had landed. It is understood that visual contact was made – and that one of the fighters was subjected to a number of close approaches by the UFO.



# Post script

Your letters to  
THE UNEXPLAINED

Dear Sir,

I live near the landing strip at RAF Wattisham (a Phantom base) and have had two weird experiences to do with planes. I swear one was a UFO and the other an invisible magnetic force field. Both were awe-inspiring and frightening. Both times I made a mental note of the details, but I know better than to question the RAF, as they are covered by the Official Secrets Act. Even so I wonder if anything showed up on their radar screens.

On the first occasion, I noted in my diary for the day (28 August 1978) that there was an air attack exercise taking place at Wattisham. Then at 10 p.m. I saw the UFO. There was no engine noise, just a square yellow light preceded by a white intermittent glow like a lighthouse's. It went down in the fields behind some bushes, in the direction of Battisford. I thought of running to get a neighbour, but wondered how to explain what had happened – especially if they had seen nothing. Can one create a sighting from the imagination? I have never had a repeat of this experience.

On the other occasion I was out walking with the kids and the dog. Phantoms were flying in to land above us. One came in low and after it had gone over us there was an almighty crackling blue glow and echo. I instinctively turned as I felt something else was coming in the wake of the Phantom. There was nothing there, but I froze on the spot. So did my seven-year-old, who sensed something was happening – but my nine-year-old, who was just a few yards away, saw, heard and felt nothing. I spoke to a pilot about it later, who said the plane had probably flown through a storm and electrical current was crackling off its body. I felt it was more.

Yours sincerely,

Audrey Harvey

Stowmarket, Suffolk

*We think the pilot may well have been right in this case – certainly strange physical effects can take place in the presence of electricity. But the first experience does sound like a UFO – or, just possibly, ball lightning. You could check your memory of the event against the chart in our UFO identification article in issue 7 – and, if still in doubt, contact a UFO organisation (see page 169, issue 9).*

Dear Sir,

I am reading the first issues of *The Unexplained* and agree with the Earl of Clancarty that all of us once had psychic powers (we still do have them).

However I do not agree with the statement about reincarnation (issue 3, page 54) – that when death takes place our spirit enters into another body.

I think our spirit goes to another dimension, and we shall all meet again; meanwhile we can still commune with people here – take ghosts, for example. Faith that we do not die (only our bodies die) and that the spirits of our loved ones are still very close to us, helps the bereaved to carry on; and takes the sting out of death. Your statement seems to put the sting *into* death.

Yours sincerely,

M. Halt

Clacton-on-Sea, Essex

*We are not trying to take sides on the issue of what happens after death – and we hope you'll have read the series on Hypnosis and the results of regressive hypnosis through to the end. For it is by no means certain that the evidence for reincarnation is conclusive – our author mentions a number of possible explanations for the former lives that subjects describe. Nevertheless, many people do firmly believe that reincarnation takes place – often as a matter of faith, just as you have a faith of your own. It is perhaps worth adding that the author of our series was ordained as an Anglican clergyman, and would not wish to attack anyone's beliefs. Rather, he was approaching the subject as objectively as he could. We would all have to do some serious thinking if the case for reincarnation were to be proved conclusively – but that hasn't happened yet.*

Dear Sir,

During my lifetime I have had some very vivid dreams with clear detail which have in later years come true in every respect, although when I dreamed them I often interpreted them quite wrongly.

The first one I can recall was in 1939. I was 18 years old and had just lost my mother, who had been ill with heart disease for some time. I dreamt that I was walking along the road and passed an AA box. A complete stranger came out, and said to me 'What luck! There is a long-distance call from your mother – would you take it?' I answered the call and spoke with my mother, who assured me she was very well, and asked me to tell Daddy that he was not to worry about her: she was very happy. I awoke from the dream feeling happier than I had felt for some time.

My second vivid dream occurred in about 1941, when the war was on. I dreamt I was walking down the aisle of a church in white, complete with veil and so on – but there was no bridegroom. I had no young man at the time, so my friends and I laughed at this dream. I forgot all about it until a few years later, when I happened to be walking up the aisle of a church in white, complete with veil. My dream flashed in front of my eyes – but I was being confirmed by the Bishop! I had misinterpreted my dream, but the detail was exact.

More recently, I have had a colourful dream in which I was abroad with my husband and two sons on a boat. At the time of dreaming, this was not possible, as we had only a small 26-foot [8-metre] sailing boat. I remembered the dream and the place we visited so vividly I could sketch a picture of it.

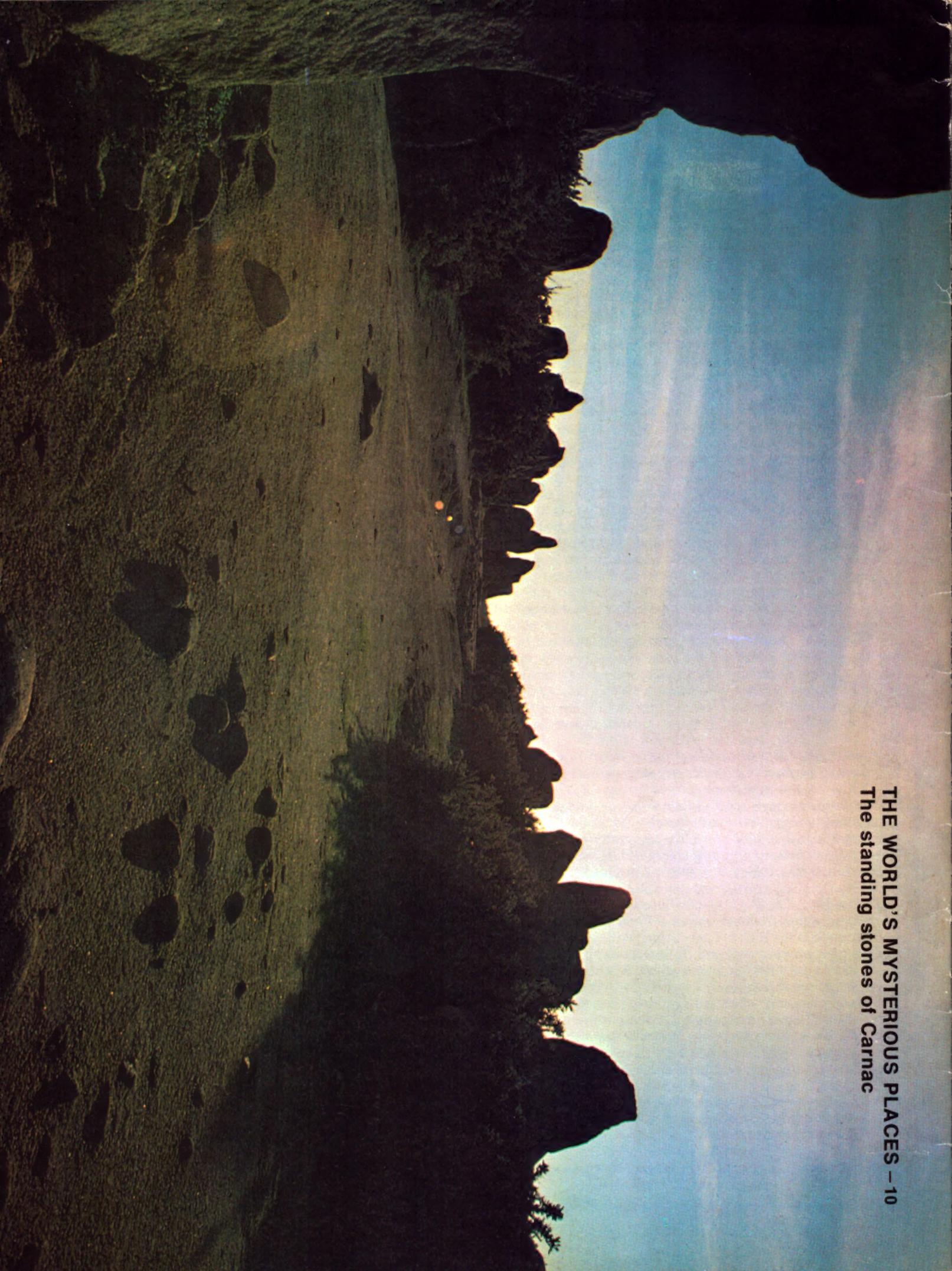
Then, two years ago, we went on a weekend trip to Brussels, and again every detail of my dream was there, even to the colourful surroundings.

I hope you can understand this. I wonder whether other readers have had similar experiences?

Yours faithfully,

D. Parish (Mrs)

Ipswich, Suffolk



THE WORLD'S MYSTERIOUS PLACES – 10  
The standing stones of Carnac